IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No 8412 of 2000

For Approval and Signature:

Hon'ble MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

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1. Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgements? : NO

2. To be referred to the Reporter or not? : NO

3. Whether Their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgement? : NO

4. Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution of India, 1950 of any Order made thereunder? : NO

5. Whether it is to be circulated to the Civil Judge? : NO

RAJESH @ RAJA RAJENDRA SHAHA

Versus

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

Appearance:

MR CHETAN B RAVAL for Petitioner

MR UDAY BHATT, AGP, for the respondents.

CORAM : MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

Date of decision: 13/10/2000

ORAL JUDGEMENT

1. Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad City, Ahmedabad, passed an order on the 8th June, 2000, in exercise of powers under Section 3(1) of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA Act" for short), detaining the petitioner-Rajesh alias Raja Ramendra Shaha under the provisions of the said Act.

2. The detaining authority took into consideration one offence registered against the petitioner under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956, so also the statements of two anonymous witnesses. The detaining authority considered the activities of the detenu as that of a dangerous person as defined under the PASA Act and observed that the petitioner is required to be immediately prevented from pursuing his activities, which are detrimental to public order. The authority also considered the possibility of resorting to less drastic remedies and came to conclusion that detention under PASA Act is the only remedy that can be resorted to.

3. The petitioner challenges the order of detention on various grounds. Mr. Raval, learned advocate appearing for the petitioner, has restricted his arguments to the ground that there is improper exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act. He has drawn attention of this Court to the fact that the statements of anonymous witnesses were verified on the 7th June, 2000 and the order detention was passed on the 8th June, 2000. The authority, therefore, had no time to undertake the exercise of verifying the correctness and genuineness of the fear expressed by the witnesses qua the detenu. Mr. Raval submitted further that, so far as the offence is concerned, it is a solitary offence punishable under Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 and the man is branded as immoral traffic offender. Mr. Raval submitted that for branding a man as immoral traffic offender, he must be shown to be a habbitual offender. Admittedly, there is only one offence registered against the petitioner. He, therefore, submitted that the petition may be allowed.

4. Mr. Bhatt, learned Assistant Government Pleader, has opposed this petition.

5. Considering rival side contentions, it appears that the statements of anonymous witnesses have been recorded on the 6th June, 2000. The same have been verified by the detaining authority on the 7th June, 2000 and the order is passed on the 8th June, 2000. So far as the statements of anonymous witnesses are concerned, it may be noted that the detaining authority has observed that the fear expressed by the witnesses and the statements and the statements are correct and genuine. Barring this statement in the grounds of detention, there appears nothing to indicate an exercise having been

undertaken by the detaining authority for verifying correctness and genuineness of the statements and the fear expressed by the witnesses. The detaining authority has to take into consideration the background, the antecedents, the character, etc. of the detenu while considering the need for exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act. The authority has to scale the right of the detenu of making an effective representation on the one hand and the public interest on the other and has to strike a balance between the two. The detaining authority has not filed any affidavit nor is there any contemporaneous material to indicate undertaking of such exercise by the detaining authority and, therefore, the exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act can be taken to have vitiated. No reliance, therefore, can be placed on these statements for sustaining the order of detention. There is improper exercise of powers under Section 9(2), as there is no material to indicate the exercise as stated above (Bai Amina v. State of Gujarat & Ors., 1981 GLR 1186 and Kalidas Chandubhai Kahar v. State of Gujarat & Ors., 1993(2) GLR 1659).

6. Adverting to the offence registered against the detenu, it appears that there is only one offence registered against the petitioner under the provisions of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956. For branding a man as immoral traffic offender under the provisions of the Act, he must be shown to be habbitual offender. Admittedly, in the instant case, there is only one offence registered against him that can be considered as a ground. Since the two statements cannot be considered in light of the decision in the case of Kalidas Chandubhai Kahar (supra), the detention, therefore, would be vitiated and the petition deserves to be allowed.

7. In the result, the petition is allowed. The impugned order of detention dated the 8th June, 2000, passed against the detenu is hereby quashed. The detenuRajesh alias Raja Ramendra Shaha is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith, if not required in any other matter. Rule is made absolute with no orders as to costs.

[A.L. DAVE, J.]

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